

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of using a computer system for on-line processing of merchandise returns, comprising the steps
5 of:

receiving, via the Internet, a return request representing a request by a customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise; and

10 processing the return in accordance with one or more return rules associated with the merchandise.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the receiving step is performed via an Internet access tool associated with the customer.

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3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is preceded by the steps of storing the return rules in a database and of matching the item to the stored rules.

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4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by determining if the return is valid.

25 5. The method of Claim 4, further comprising step of notifying the customer, via the Internet, whether the return is valid.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by determining disposition of the item.

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7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by determining a shipping destination of the item.

5 8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by electronically notifying a merchant associated with the return.

10 9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the processing step is performed by crediting an account of the customer.

15 10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of electronically delivering data about the customer to a merchant associated with the return.

20 11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a user interface to the customer, via an Internet access tool, wherein the user interface displays information associated with return of one or more items purchased by the customer.

25 12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the user interface displays a list of transactions associated with the customer, listing items for potential return by the customer.

30 13. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of downloading a return label to the customer via the Internet.

14. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying a shipping agent of the return.

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15. An on-line merchandise return system,
comprising a computer system programmed to:
receive a return request, via the Internet,
representing a request by a customer to initiate a return
5 at least one item of merchandise; and

process the return in accordance with one or more
return rules associated with the merchandise.

16. The system of Claim 15, wherein the computer
10 system is further programmed to access stored return
rules associated with the merchandise and match the item
to the return rules.

17. A computer product for facilitating online merchandise return services, the computer product having instructions for:

receiving, via the Internet, a return request
5 representing a request by a customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise; and
processing the return in accordance with one or more return rules associated with the merchandise.

10 18. The computer product of Claim 17, wherein the instructions are further for accessing stored return rules associated with the merchandise and matching the item to the return rules.

19. A method of using a computer for online merchandise returns, comprising the steps of:
receiving one or more return rules representing merchandise return policies of a merchant; and
5 storing the return rules in a database.

20. An on-line merchandise return system,
comprising a computer system programmed to:
receive one or more return rules representing
merchandise return policies of a merchant; and
5 store the return rules in a database.

21. A computer product for facilitating online merchandise return services, the computer product having instructions for:

receiving one or more return rules representing
5 merchandise return policies of a merchant; and
storing the return rules in a database.

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22. A method of using a computer system for on-line processing of merchandise returns, comprising the steps of:

receiving, via the Internet, a return request
5 representing a request by a customer to initiate a return of at least one item of merchandise; and
electronically notifying a merchant of the return.

23. The method of Claim 22, further comprising the
10 step of electronically providing the merchant with information about the customer.

24. An on-line merchandise return system,
comprising a computer system programmed to:
receive, via the Internet, a return request
representing a request by a customer to initiate a return
5 of at least one item of merchandise; and
electronically notify the merchant of the return.

25. The method of Claim 24, wherein the system is
further programmed to electronically provide the merchant
10 with information about the customer.

26. A computer product for facilitating online merchandise return services, the computer product having instructions for:

receiving return rules representing merchandise
5 return policies of a merchant; and
electronically notifying the merchant of the return.

27. The computer product of Claim 26, wherein the instructions are further for electronically providing the
10 merchant with information about the customer.